




# biscuits, the theory and practice



Chaz

 [cvillette](https://cvillette.livejournal.com/)

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**MOOD:** 😊 bouncy

**MUSIC:** Tracy Chapman - Let it Rain

Biscuits are poor people food, and like most poor people food, they essentially comprise a delivery device by which cheap fats and carbohydrates are made palatable. They're also really easy, and really good.

First, begin heating your oven to 475 degrees F, and make sure your big cast iron pan is seasoned and sitting ready. If you don't have a big cast iron pan, you can use a cookie sheet, but it's cheating.

What you need:

- 2 cups sifted soft wheat flour, though you can substitute all-purpose flour. Especially if you're a good hand with pastry, it should work just fine. What soft wheat flour is, is wheat flour with a low protein content, producing a silkier, less chewy result. Pastry and cake flour also work--they are softer than bread flour. Please notice that two cups sifted is different from two sifted cups. Sift, then measure, because sifting makes the flour fluffy.
- 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon of of double-acting baking powder. ([Food chemistry of baking powder here.](http://cvillette.livejournal.com/31238.html) (<http://cvillette.livejournal.com/31238.html>))
- 2 tablespoons of sugar
- .5 teaspoon of salt
- .5 tablespoon cream of tartar. (The cream of tartar is really optional in baking powder biscuits; it's a holdover from baking *soda* biscuits, but it does help them rise. Cream of tartar is is the common name for potassium hydrogen tartrate, an acid salt obtained when tartaric acid is partially neutralized with potassium hydroxide. The only common

natural source of tartaric acid is is grapes, and cream of tartar is made from what's deposited as a sediment in wine barrels--and has been for thousands of years, in the Middle East.)

- 8 tablespoons (.5 cup) of solid fat--shortening, butter, bacon grease, schmaltz--very cold from the fridge. Don't use margarine, because margarine is disgusting, and makes anything you put it in taste like margarine. Biscuits are kind of a religion, and everybody who makes them has a favorite fat or ratio of fats, but whatever you have in the house will work, though of course every solid fat has a characteristic flavor.
- .5 cup of buttermilk, or milk and yogurt mixed--or maybe a little more.
- Flour for your hands and the table

Mix together the dry ingredients (before the break) in a bowl. Then cut in the (very cold) shortening. You can use your fingers. A pastry cutter works, but really, fingers were good enough for your grandmother. This part, you do not have to be Captain Speed Freak about, though you want to keep the fat cold, so do it as quickly as you can.

Once the fat is broken up into grains about the size of a pea or smaller, begin adding the milk or buttermilk, mixing it with your other hand. This part, you need to do absolutely as fast as you possibly can, both because the baking powder starts to work *immediately* upon getting wet, but because once the flour touches liquid, it starts developing gluten, and gluten makes things chewy. Biscuits  $\neq$  chewy.

When the biscuit dough is a sticky, thick, shapable mass, stop adding milk and mixing it immediately. Flour your hands and the table, take it out of the bowl, and pat it into a loaf about an inch thick. Then take a drinking glass, and punch it out into circles. You could be able to get between nine and twelve biscuits, depending on how good you are with spatial relations. The best part about the drinking glass, and the reason to use that and not a cookie cutter, is that if you make sure each punched biscuit completely fills the glass, when you lift the glass straight up again there will be a soft little *pft!* noise and the air pressure will push the biscuit back out of the glass! Magic!

You can push the scraps together and punch them out into more biscuits maybe one more time, but if you keep messing with the dough it will get tough or fail to rise. *Be fast.*

Okay. Take your biscuits, put them in your skillet, and put the skillet in the oven in the middle. Set your timer for eight minutes. Come back and check. They will probably take ten or eleven minutes (they're done when they are golden brown).

Take them out of the oven, put butter or gravy or jam or cheese or sausage on them, or strawberries sliced up and macerated in sugar, or serve with fried chicken or greens or black-eyed peas. Eat.

Ta.

Biscuits.

Magic.

**TAGS:** [recipes](#)



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All right, unconscious mind. We're coming to an accommodation. If the dreams are you cleaning

[Elvis doesn't live here anymore.](#)

Hey there. Sorry about the drama. It was... it was an emotional decision, and I didn't

[Poppets.](#)

[Puppets. Poppet puppets. Scary.](#)

27 comments



 [trollcatz](#)

[January 1 2008, 21:49:21 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

There are cultures in which these biscuits serve as a marriage proposal.



 [cvillette](#)


[January 1 2008, 22:18:34 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Food symbolism: Because they're warm and tender? Because you have to eat 'em while they're hot?

\*blush\*



 [trollcatz](#)

[January 1 2008, 22:23:30 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

Because the recipient is guaranteed to want to ensure a consistent supply.




 [cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 22:32:22 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

Oh! They're the herd of milk goats! I see. Husband/bride price. Hah!

But one need not make a lifetime committment to have regular biscuits. Teach a girl to fish, ya know...



 [trollcatz](#)

[January 1 2008, 22:34:05 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

I am going to have to pay you off somehow. Because this is all part of my grand plan to make sure that Tricia wants to keep me.

Home defense, biscuits, and neck rubs. That's gotta be enough, right?



 [cvillette](#)

[January 2 2008, 00:36:23 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

Um, I think, umm, there might be, y'know, something else. Um.

\*blush\*

 [Ometotchtli](#)

[January 2 2008, 00:37:25 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

Words beginning with "s"? Snuggling, snogging, shagging?



 [trollcatz](#)

[January 2 2008, 00:39:08 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

You should see her ex.

I need heavy artillery.




[Ometotchtli](#)

[January 2 2008, 00:55:19 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

And did the ex become the ex in some bizarre and unheard-of way, or did that happen by, oh, say, breaking up?

Because if the latter, you do notice you have sort of an inside track, don't you?



 [trollcatz](#)

[January 2 2008, 00:57:28 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

Mmm. Yeah, you see, that's the problem. You see, it sure doesn't hurt to be able to make biscuits. Because, you know. What happens to the ex can happen to me....


 [Ometotchtli](#)

[January 2 2008, 00:59:38 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

Sis, it may be time for me to take you out for beer and explain the facts of life to you.

You can buy the beer.



 [trollcatz](#)

[January 2 2008, 01:01:08 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

You don't believe that spoiling romantic partners is a good way to keep them from turning you out onto the cold streets to hawk wooden matches?



 [cvillette](#)

[January 2 2008, 01:01:42 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

She's generally the one that does the turning out, remember?

 [Ometotchtli](#)

[January 2 2008, 01:06:11 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

Mai oui. I am the world's greatest expert on how to get tossed out, seeing as I am a highly-skilled and discerning tosser-outer. You may trust me, ma petite.



 [trollcatz](#)

[January 2 2008, 01:07:22 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

0.0



 [cvillette](#)

[January 2 2008, 01:08:25 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

And the new Boy?

 [Ometotchtli](#)

[January 2 2008, 01:09:08 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

New Year's Eve is over, sweetie. What would I do with him now?




 [cvillette](#)

[January 2 2008, 00:58:19 UTC](#)    [COLLAPSE](#)

*I am going to have to pay you off somehow.*

You're a funny Harpy. Just sayin'.

 Ometotchtli

January 2 2008, 00:49:27 UTC    COLLAPSE

I am frightened.

I might have eaten enough food.

No, really.

OMG, I feel WONDERFUL.

I even liked the green stuff.

Incipient food coma!

What's for breakfast?




 cvillette

January 2 2008, 00:50:53 UTC    COLLAPSE

The extra pan of cornbread, cut in squares, split, and fried in butter in the cast-iron skillet. Choice of molasses or maple syrup on top.

Too bad there isn't room for everyone to sleep over... \*g\*



 trollcatz

January 2 2008, 00:53:32 UTC    COLLAPSE

Cheeeeeesecake. Really dense, cheesy, floury, NewYorkish cheesecake.

I know someone who makes spectacular cheesecake. When I was a child, I had no idea what sort of fairytale good fortune I would happen on.

 Ometotchtli

January 2 2008, 01:02:24 UTC    COLLAPSE

Cheese. It's not dessert, it's dinner.

 porcinea

January 9 2008, 18:12:51 UTC    COLLAPSE

If you want biscuits you can make before you've had your coffee, try cream biscuits.


160 g. self-rising flour (yes, my mother mocks me for this)

sugar to taste (throw in a handful)

180 g. heavy cream (not half and half or light cream -- the carton will say whipping or heavy)

Stir sugar into self-rising flour. Stir cream into dry. A soft ball of dough will form. Knead for 30 seconds (use regular flour on your hands -- self-rising leaves a nasty metallic taste on the outsides). Pat or roll out. Cut with cookie cutters or a drinking glass or a pizza cutter. Squish scraps together into approximately same-sized biscuits as the ones you cut out. (Scraps make some of the best biscuits because of the tasty crunchy edges you get in the middle.) Bake in a hot oven (475 deg. F is good) for 10 minutes.


Devour.

 [cvillette](#)  
[January 9 2008, 18:14:18 UTC](#)   [COLLAPSE](#)

Any biscuit that's on its way inside me is a good biscuit.


Well, mostly.

Thank you!

 [kbk](#)  
[March 8 2008, 11:02:41 UTC](#)   [COLLAPSE](#)

I just tried these. They were a bit soggy in the middle, so I think I didn't use enough flour? but they are quick and tasty and they made the kitchen smell goooood, so I will certainly be giving them another go.

They are quite like what I, as a Brit, would call scones, but perhaps not as dense. Anyhoo. Thank you kindly for the recipe.

 [porcinea](#)  
[March 8 2008, 12:22:44 UTC](#)   [COLLAPSE](#)

For "soggy in the middle" I'd suggest cook them a little longer. If they're getting too brown, then go ahead and turn down the oven some, and just let them soak up a little more heat.

 [kbk](#)  
[March 8 2008, 16:49:28 UTC](#)   [COLLAPSE](#)

Ah, that sounds about right. Thanks!

[locked] [Dream Journal](#)

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